Fernando Herrera's

ASTRO CHASE

"there is no escape!"™
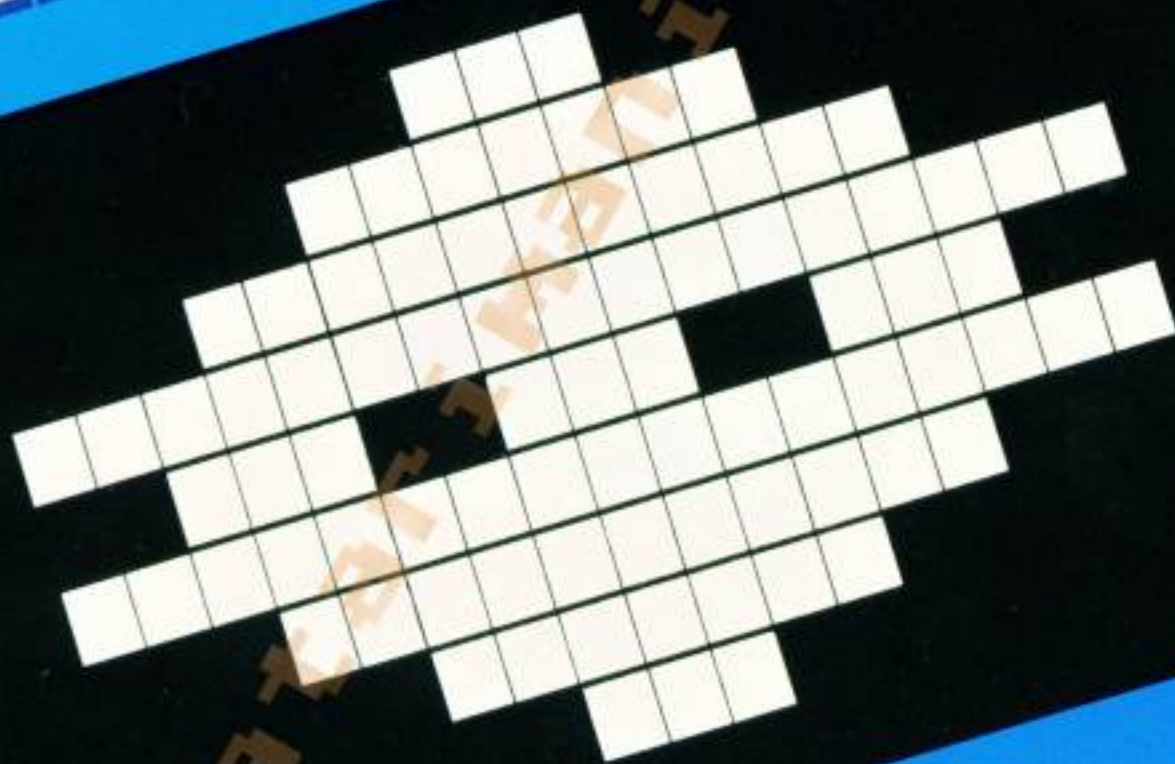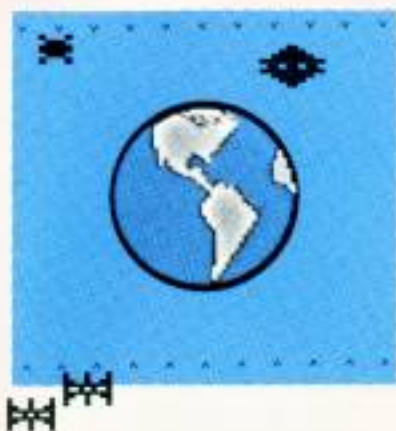
Program Instructions

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Introduction

Eons ago, back in the 23rd century, the Megard Empire invaded Earth. Our defenses had all but destroyed the Megardian fleet, forcing the survivors to retreat. As you probably know, there is nothing meaner than a defeated Megardian. The remaining Megards, united in their humiliation, vowed a deadly revenge. Now, they have returned!

For centuries, their hatred has brewed. They have taken Earth by surprise and surrounded our galaxy with a huge force field from which *there is no escape!* The Megardians have placed pulsating Mega Mines in orbit around our planet. Each of these orbiting space mines contains enough nuclear mega tonnage to blow up the Earth on contact.

With the Force-Field in place and the Mega Mines slowly closing in on us, the enemy has launched its awesome attack. Their squadrons advance—wave after wave . . . Their sole mission is to track and destroy any Earth saucer which has been sent forth to vaporize the Mega Mines before any of them demolish the Earth.

Your Mission

Save the Earth from total destruction by eliminating the Mega Mines . . . the ultimate threat. There are 16 Mega Mines and a different number and type of enemy attack fighters on each of the 34 levels, or "Chases."

Attack fighters are programmed to distract and demolish your saucer. If your saucers are all destroyed, then the Mega Mines will advance quickly and pounce upon the Earth. The destruction of the planet is evidenced first by a pulsating of the galaxy, followed by a spectacular explosion in which the fragments of the Earth shatter in all directions. This is not only the end of our planet, but the end of the game as well.

The mission's primary objective—"destroy all Mega Mines"—must never be forgotten. It requires intense concentration and you must continually remember to patrol the Earth (located in the center of one-tenth of the galaxy), or all will be lost.

Minimum RAM & Accessories

Required Accessories:
32K RAM for cassette version
32K RAM for diskette version
ATARI® 410™ Program Recorder for cassette *or*
ATARI® 810™ Disk Drive for diskette
Joystick Controller

ATARI® is a registered trademark of Atari, Inc.

32K

Loading Instructions

Diskette Version:

1. Turn power switch on disk drive "on" and wait for the busy light to turn "off." Open the disk drive and insert the diskette. Close the disk drive.
2. Turn on TV set or video monitor.
3. Plug joystick into left-most port.
4. Make sure there are no cartridges inserted in the computer; turn computer "on."
5. After a few seconds, the FIRST STAR SOFTWARE, INC. logo and credit should appear on the screen.
6. The remainder of the program will continue loading until the first blast-off animation appears on the screen.

Cassette Version:

1. Make sure all disk drives are turned "off."
2. Insert cassette into the cassette recorder.
3. Rewind tape compeltely.
4. Press Play button on the cassette recorder.
5. Turn "on" TV or video monitor.
6. Press the Start button on the computer, and *HOLD* it down while turning the computer on. You should hear a beep.
7. Press return.
8. A constant string of beeps on the TV or video monitor will indicate that the program is loading correctly into the computer.
9. After a few minutes, the FIRST STAR SOFTWARE, INC. logo and credit should appear on the screen. You will hear a beep. Press return.

10. The program will continue to load until the blast-off animation appears on the screen.

Note 1: On side B of your cassette tape, you have a backup copy of the program. If loading is not successful on the first side, try side B.

Note 2: If loading is still unsuccessful, do one of the following:

a) Recheck all equipment for proper connections and sufficient RAM.

b) Rewind tape and advance the tape one or two points on the computer and repeat Steps 1–10.

c) Have alignment of cassette recorder checked.

How To Start

Next on your screen, you will see one-tenth of the galaxy and your saucer located about one inch to the right of the Earth's equator. "Chase 8" will be written on the screen's scoreboard, located below the galaxy and on top of the message window.

You can choose to play this Chase (8) by pressing the START button on your computer or select another by using the SELECT button. Chase levels will advance one at a time. In order to go to a lower Chase, keep the SELECT button depressed until you reach Chase 24. The next Chase will then be Chase 1.

You canNOT select Chases 25 through 34, you must survive Chase 24 to be awarded the opportunity to play Chase 25 or higher. If you lose at any Chase past 24 you will be returned to Chase 23.

Once you have selected the desired Chase, depress the START button on the computer. The game will begin and your energy will start to deplete at the rate of one unit per second. Your saucer will commence its flight as soon as it appears on the display. After any animated sequence (there are 8) your saucer will appear next to Earth, and it will commence its flight automatically.

Playing The Game

START BUTTON: Depress the START button to commence a new Chase after the Earth has been destroyed, or to begin for the first time.

SELECT BUTTON: Use this feature to select the Chase of your choice.

OPTION BUTTON: This button will abort your mission. Anytime during a game, while your saucer is moving, you can use this feature to start over or select another Chase by first pressing the OPTION button and then the appropriate "START" or "SELECT" buttons.

Caution: If you use Mission Abort while playing progressive Chase advances, all your accumulated bonus saucers will be lost and your "run" will be ended.

TRIGGER BUTTON: The TRIGGER BUTTON on your joystick may be used:

To continue play by bringing up the next saucer, to advance to the next highest Chase if you have survived and saved the Earth, or to alter the function of your joystick so that the pressure and aiming of the joystick will control your lasers—NOT the saucer's direction of travel.

While your saucer is moving, depress the SPACE BAR and the action will pause. The screen will now appear deep blue and the images will "freeze." Press the SPACE BAR again to restart the action.

LETTER "S" KEY: The music (The 1812 Overture by Tchikovsky) automatically gets softer when a game begins. If you wish to hear ONLY the battle sounds, you can eliminate the music by depressing this key. To restore the music, press the "S" key again. This feature can be used at any time.

RESET BUTTON: The RESET button will restart the game beginning with the animation sequence. The high score will be lost.

JOYSTICK: Use your JOYSTICK to either control the flight direction of your saucer or, with the trigger depressed, aim and fire your lasers.

Game Features

BONUS SAUCERS: Each time you start the game for the first time or begin a new Chase *after* the Earth has been destroyed, you receive three (3) saucers, each having 1,000 units of energy. If you vaporize all of the Mega Mines, you will automatically proceed to the next highest Chase (by depressing the trigger) *AND* you will be rewarded two (2) additional Bonus Saucers, with 1,000 units energy each.

You will continue to collect two (2) bonus saucers for each Chase survived until the Earth is destroyed or until you press the OPTION button for Mission Abort.

SCORING POINTS: Points for enemy ships destroyed, Mega Mines vaporized, and energy remaining are awarded as follows:

ATTACK FIGHTERS:

Ramatrons 10   Ramatron Jets 30

Ramalons 20   Ramalon Jets........ 40

Firetrons............ 50   Firetron Jets........... 70

Firelons............. 60   Firelon Jets 80

Each Mega Mine is worth three (3) times the point value of the type of attack fighter appearing in that Chase, i.e. In Chase 1, Ramatrons worth 10 points each are the attacking fighters. Therefore, each Mega Mine vaporized is worth 30 (3 X 10) points.

REMAINING ENERGY: If you survive a Chase, the energy remaining in your saucer is converted into points and added to your score.

INTERMISSIONS: There are seven (7) different animated intermissions, each awarded upon surviving Chases. After each intermission, the game automatically begins at the next higher Chase.

To Play Summary

1. Load Program (see LOADING INSTRUCTIONS) and wait for the completion of the blastoff animation.
2. Select desired level (see HOW TO START).
3. Press START button.
4. The saucer will commence flight as soon as it appears, and play begins.
5. After a saucer is destroyed, check the score board, then press the TRIGGER button and your next saucer will appear.
6. When all saucers are used and/or the Earth has been destroyed, press the start or select button to move to a new Chase. If you press the start button, you will restart at the next lower Chase. Press the select button to go to any other Chase (except Chases 25–34).
7. If you have survived and saved the Earth, you will advance to the next Chase by pressing the trigger button.

The Enemy Offense
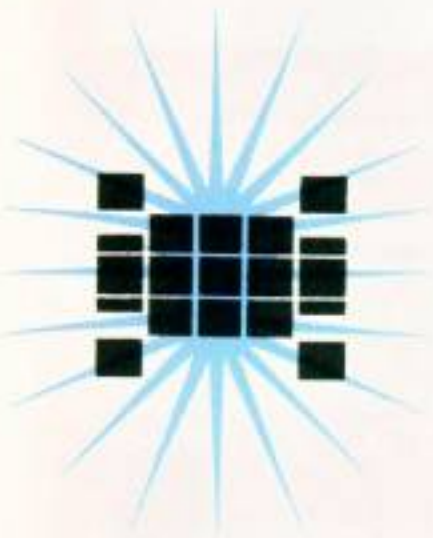
The treacherous Megardians will stop at nothing. Their arsenal is equipped with:

MEGA MINES: These pulsating Mega Mines are the ultimate threat. You must hit the Mega Mines with a direct laser blast from your saucer in order to vaporize them. They are harder to hit and sometimes require several shots to vaporize them. At the beginning of each game the Mega Mines start (off the first screen) in the far edges of the galaxy. They creep slowly and relentlessly towards Earth, pulled in by the Earth's gravity.

ATTACK FIGHTERS: The fleet of attack fighters is comprised of eight (8) types of ships. There are five (5) characteristics that distinguish the ships from one another. These features are: speed, shape, ramming ability, firing of lasers and passing through planets. The eight fighters are:

1. **Ramatrons:** They ram ONLY, and cannot go through planets. They are slower than the jets.

2. **Ramalons:** They ram ONLY, but CAN go through planets.

3. **Firetrons:** They ram AND fire lasers, but canNOT go through planets.

4. **Firelons:** They ram and fire lasers, and CAN go through planets.

5. **Ramatron Jets:** They ram ONLY, but canNOT go through planets. All jets have double speed.

6. **Ramalon Jets:** They ram ONLY, and CAN go through planets.

7. **Firetron Jets:** They ram AND fire lasers, but can NOT go through planets.

8. **Firelon Jets:** They ram AND fire lasers, and CAN go through planets.

FORCE-FIELD: The galaxy is surrounded by an invisible force field from which there is no escape! The perimeters of this field are defined by the four (4) Energy Generators located in the four (4) furthermost corners of space, and by the eight (8) Shield Depots located across the top, sides and bottom of the field. If you hit the Force-Field, the galaxy sparks—you lose energy—and will bounce back. You can, however, shoot through the Force-Field and destroy attack fighters or Mega Mines within the Zapper Zone.

Your Defenses

There are several defenses, all of which must be used to save the Earth, master the game and progress to he next Chase.

YOUR SAUCERS: As the sole pilot qualified to fly Earth's most advanced aircraft, you have at your command the ultimate space saucer. WithOUT shields activated, the saucer appears white, with small rectangular windows. This craft is equipped with Single Thrust Propulsion™ (see below) and laser cannons. With your shield "on," you can ram enemy fighters.

SINGLE THRUST PROPULSION™: This proprietary process enables you to lock your saucer on course, at a constant speed, AND continue to shoot in any direction simultaneously, regardless of the direction of travel. To fly, simply tap the joystick in the direction you wish to head. There is no need to keep pressure on the joystick. To alter your flight direction make sure your finger is off the trigger, and reposition the joystick.

LASERS: To fire lasers, first you must press the trigger button on the joystick *and* while keeping the trigger button down, move the joystick in the direction you want the laser to shoot. You can fire single shots, bursts or machine-gun fire, depending on how long you keep the JOYSTICK depressed. The trigger is NOT pushed each time you fire a blast. It is pressed *first*, and held down as the joystick is used to actually aim and fire the lasers. As long as the trigger is depressed AND the joystick is engaged, your saucer will continue to fire as the saucer continues to travel straight, locked onto your last directional command. The only limit to your laser supply is available energy. The actual number of shots is unlimited. You can keep shooting as long as you survive and reenergize. You can shoot in eight (8) different directions.

SHIELDS: You can activate shields and become invulnerable to all enemy blasts and ramming. Simply fly over one of the eight (8) Shield Depots. The shield lasts for a maximum of ten seconds, decreasing as the level of the Chase advances. With your shields "on," if you ram an attack fighter or if they ram you, only THEY will be destroyed. Without shields "on," your saucer is white. When activating shields, you will hear a short musical cue and the saucer will flash, multi-colored. You will use 100 units of energy upon activating your shields.

ENERGY: Your saucers are each equipped with 1,000 units of energy at the games' start. There is an endless supply of energy available from each of the four (4) Energy Generators located just within the four corners of the Force-Field. You use energy at the rate of one (1) unit per second of saucer flight time. It is also used when you: fire your lasers (one per blast), activate shields (100), bump into Hot Stars, planets, or the Force-Field.

A warning that the energy level is low will flash on the screen when its level drops to 300. You canNOT reenergize with shields activated. When your saucer's fuel supply is depleted, the saucer will blow up.

If you save Earth on a given Chase and advance to the next Chase, the energy remaining on your last saucer will be converted into points and added to your score.

To reenergize, fly over an Energy Generator. Each horizontal pass (side to side) gives you twelve (12) additional units of energy. Each vertical pass (up and down) gives you twenty-four (24) units of energy. The amount of energy gained is determined by: the number of passes over the Generator, how long you can hover over the Generator and the direction you choose to cross over the Generator.

BLOCKING: When being attacked by a Ramatron, a Firetron, a Ramatron Jet, or a Firetron Jet you can use the planets to block their advance.

DODGING: Enemy laser blasts, like yours, travel in a straight line. If you are far enough away and quick enough, you can side-step an enemy laser blasts even after they have been fired.

RAMMING: With your shields "on," you can ram any attack fighter. However, you canNOT eliminate Mega Mines in this manner.
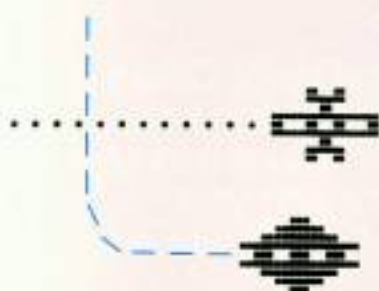
Summary

Enemy Offense

1. FORCE-FIELD: You canNOT pass through it, you bounce back. You lose energy if you bump it. You CAN shoot through it.

2. MEGA MINES: There are 16 of them. They pulsate, which helps you to find them when they hide on top of planets. These are the ultimate threat. One can destroy the Earth.

3. ATTACK FIGHTERS: There are 8 types. The ones with vertical axis can shoot at you. Check chart to see which ones ram; ram and pass through planets; ram, pass through and fire; and which ones have double speed.

Your Defenses

1. SINGLE THRUST PROPULSION™: You use this to lock your saucer on course, and maintain a constant speed while shooting in any of eight directions.

2. LASERS: You can fire single shots, bursts or machine-gun-fire. Your supply of laser shots is limitless, but energy is expended when shooting. You can shoot in 8 basic directions. Depress trigger button, hold it down, then move the joystick to fire in desired direction.

3. SHIELDS: They last for 10 seconds on the lower Chase levels. As the Chase's difficulty increases, the duration time for shields decreases. With your shields "on" you are invulnerable. You use 100 units of energy in activating your shields. You canNOT energize with shields "on." There are 8 shield Depots.

4. ENERGY: Your first three saucers and all bonus saucers start with 1,000 units of energy. When advancing to the next higher Chase (having saved the Earth), the first saucer in this Chase is actually the surviving saucer from the previous Chase. It will have ONLY the remaining energy. The supply of energy available from the 4 Energy Generators, located in the 4 corners of the Force-Field, is limitless. You canNOT reenergize with shields "on."

5. BLOCKING: Since half of the enemy attack fleet canNOT pass through planets, you can place the planets between yourself and these ships to block their advance.

6. DODGING: If you are fast enough, you can side step an enemy laser blast even after it is fired.

7. RAMMING: With shields "on," you can ram enemy attack fighters. You can NEVER ram Mega Mines.

Gaming Hints

1. REMEMBER to patrol Earth! When off in space activating shields, reenergizing, doing battle or hunting Mega Mines, it is easy to forget that you can ONLY see about one-tenth of the galaxy at any one time.

2. Only by returning to Earth and scouting its circumference can you hope to find and destroy all the Mega Mines before the Earth explodes.

3. Use the scoreboard to keep track of the number of Mega Mines you have yet to find.

4. Use SINGLE THRUST PROPULSION™. If you have passed by a target or you are travelling to another part of the galaxy, keep shooting at targets behind, below, and above—*NOT* just in front of you. You will bounce, pinball-like off planets, Hot Stars and the Force-Field; whenever your direction changes, try shooting in the opposite direction. Soon, it will become second nature to shoot at a Mega Mine or fighter while you are flying past it. With Single Thrust Propulsion™, your saucer does NOT have to be heading towards your target to shoot it!!

5. To explore the total capabilities of Single Thrust Propulsion™, you might wish to start at Chase 1.
a) At this level, you have 16 Mega Mines to destroy. The enemy attack fighters are RAMATRONS, which will attack you one at a time. They will attempt to ram you, but they canNOT shoot at you nor can they pass through planets. Practice flying to the top of the screen (until you bump into a planet, Hot Star or the Force-Field) while shooting towards the bottom of the screen. Next, try flying to the right while flying towards the left. Then try flying to the bottom while shooting towards the bottom.
b) You can use planets to "run interference" and for blocking the ramming efforts of the enemy fighter. This works on all Chase levels.
c) You do NOT need to use your shields often (if at all) and your energy can be conserved for laser blasts.
d) Practice outrunning and evading enemy attack fighters. Don't be concerned about winning in this practice level.

6. In advanced Chase, keep your shields on, ignore enemy fighters—just hunt those Mega Mines.

7. Once bonus saucers have been accumulated, it is sometimes wiser to sacrifice a saucer and stay by Earth, rather than travel to reenergize or activate shields, thereby leaving the planet unprotected.

ENERGY GENERATORS

SHIELD DEPOTS

MEGA MINES

HOT STARS

SAUCER

ENEMY ATTACK FIGHTERS

INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD

Chase Level and Rank	Attack Fighters	Fighter Capabilities*	Fleet Formation	Points per Fighter

BEGINNER

Chase Level and Rank	Attack Fighters	Fighter Capabilities*	Fleet Formation	Points per Fighter
1	Ramatron	R		10
2	Ramalon	R, PT		20
3	Ramatron	R		10
4	Ramalon	R, PT		20
5	Firetron	R, FL		50
6	Firelon	R, FL, PT		60
7	Ramatron	R		10
8	Ramalon	R, PT		20

INTERMEDIATE

Chase Level and Rank	Attack Fighters	Fighter Capabilities*	Fleet Formation	Points per Fighter
9	Ramatron Jet	R, DS		30
10	Ramalon Jet	R, PT, DS		40
11	Firetron	R, FL		50
12	Firelon	R, PT, FL		60
13	Ramatron Jet	R, DS		30
14	Ramalon Jet	R, PT, DS		40
15	Firetron Jet	R, FL, DS		70
16	Firelon Jet	R, PT, FL, DS		80

EXPERT

Chase Level and Rank	Attack Fighters	Fighter Capabilities*	Fleet Formation	Points per Fighter
17	Ramatron Jet	R, DS		30
18	Ramalon Jet	R, PT, DS		40
19	Firetron	R, FL		50
20	Firelon	R, PT, FL		60
21	Firetron Jet	R, FL, DS		70
22	Firelon Jet	R, PT, FL, DS		80
23	Firetron Jet	R, FL, DS		70
24	Firelon Jet	R, PT, FL, DS		80

MASTER

Chase Level and Rank	Attack Fighters	Fighter Capabilities*	Fleet Formation	Points per Fighter
25 to 34	The Ultimate Challenge!!!			

*Note:
R = Ram only
PT = Pass through Planets
FL = Fire Lasers
DS = Double Speed